



*Providing Professional Guidance for Business Growth*

## October 26, 2015

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### **Illinois SBDC Accreditation**

Last week the Accreditation Team from the America’s SBDC Network completed its onsite review of our Illinois SBDC Network. It was an extremely busy week which included numerous center site visits, discussions with staff from all of our Illinois SBDC locations, meetings with the leadership at the Illinois Department of Commerce, the SBA Illinois District office and our statewide Illinois SBDC Advisory Board and then the visit finished up on Friday with two brave Accreditation Team members (Mike Myhre-FL and Janice Washington-AZ) enjoying Springfield’s own signature dish, “The Horseshoe”. Very Huge Thanks to Mike and Janice and the rest of the team including, Diane Howerton-CA and Mark Langford-TX, and also our two observers Keith Brophy-MI and Greg Tucker-MO, for spending the week in Illinois.

The initial feedback from the Accreditation was very, very positive. Although it will be a few months until we receive the final report, the Accreditation team will provide us with outstanding guidance on how we can continue to improve and grow our Illinois SBDC Network and strengthen our processes and programs. We sincerely appreciated their outstanding efforts this past week and look forward to their report.

Special Thanks also goes out to all of the host organization representatives and the members of the SBDC Network who participated in the onsite Accreditation Review process. You provided great information, feedback and input for the Accreditation Team and they wanted to make sure we shared their thanks with the Network.

### **Spotlight on Success – SprayPikk**

Rukey Styles has an impressive resume of experience as a hair stylist. She has worked with actresses and models as well as in salons. Now, as owner of Harmony Restored, Ms. Styles is working with **Steve Bob at the Illinois Small Business Development Center at the University of Illinois** to develop and produce her invention, SprayPikk.

SprayPikk will dispense topical medication to the scalp without disturbing the hair and existing hairstyle. Ms. Styles has found that many patients with alopecia (which causes hair loss) and other scalp disorders avoid using medication that may wet and destroy their hairstyle. SprayPikk is able to deliver important medication without damaging hairstyles.

Ms. Styles was recently interviewed about her work with alopecia patients in *Sophisticate's Black Hair Magazine*. She has also discussed her work to help with self-image for breast cancer survivors.

To learn more about the SprayPikk, and Ms. Styles entrepreneurial journey, visit [www.solveskinandhair.com](http://www.solveskinandhair.com).

### **Top 5 Takeaways from the 2015 STEM Talent Innovation Index**

The Illinois Innovation Index recently released the 2015 STEM Talent Innovation Index. Below you will see a few highlights identifying the top 5 takeaways from the Index.

- Illinois' percentage of STEM graduates (28.5%) beat the nation for the first time in more than a decade
- Distinguishing strengths are in healthcare (44% of all degrees), computer science (20% above national average), STEM master's degrees (25% above national average), postdocs (7<sup>th</sup> nationally), and MBA's (40% above national average)
- Temporary resident immigrants make up a fifth of all non-health STEM graduates (hitting a peak of 4,500 in 2014) and comprise roughly half of the advanced degrees produced in these fields – underscoring the need for reforms to better retain this talent
- The fastest growing high-tech industries in Illinois by job growth over the last 5 years were in computer, engineering, and biotechnology fields
- The fastest growing STEM occupations in Illinois over the last 5 years were dominated by computer professions, driven by the demand for software and web developers and computer systems analysts

Read additional STEM Index press coverage at:



### **Maximizing Neoserra – Sending a Separate email to Each Client Using the BCC Field**

If you are using the Neoserra email capabilities **then each and every recipient will always receive a private, personal email that does not include the email addresses of any other recipient!**

When emailing from Neoserra, you do not need to put the email addresses of your clients in the BCC line because Neoserra will never show more than one email address in the "To" field. This is one of the best features of the Neoserra emailing system because it preserves the privacy of your clients while ensuring the highest probability of delivery. Often spam filters will trap emails that lump multiple email addresses in the BCC field. Neoserra avoids this problem by sending out separate email messages to each recipient.

This also allows you to take advantage of [substitution variables](#) in your email messages.

If you do put your email address in the CC or BCC field of an email message generated in Neoserra, then Neoserra assumes that you won't want to get a copy of every email message sent. Instead, it will only send you a copy of the first email that goes out. This is to prevent you from receiving hundreds of unwanted emails. If you do want a copy of every single email that is sent, then be sure to click the "Send a copy of each delivery to myself?" checkbox at the bottom of the screen.

For more information about the Neoserra emailing system, please refer to the FAQ titled: [How do I send an email to my clients from Neoserra?](#)

### **Valued Resources – Small Business Environmental Assistance Program**

Environmental regulations impact a wide range of businesses from dry cleaners and auto body shops to office buildings that have emergency generators; there are state and federal rules with varied compliance requirements. While this can be daunting for the small business owner the staff at the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) are here to assist.

Located in the Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology at the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the SBEAP staff work with small businesses to help them understand and comply with state and federal air pollution regulations.

The program serves as a free, confidential and non-regulatory resource to small business owners around the state. SBEAP staff disseminates up-to-date information, including easy-to-understand public materials to inform companies of their responsibilities under state and federal environmental regulations. They answer compliance questions, respond to written and verbal regulatory inquiries, inform business sectors of air permitting requirements and/or changes, coordinate environmental compliance workshops, and direct businesses to other pertinent technical assistance providers when necessary.

You can find more information about the Illinois SBEAP program at their web site:

<http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/EnvironmentalAssistanceProgram/Pages/default.aspx>

The SBEAP program also offers a free and confidential hotline at 800-252-3998.

### **Network News and Moves – National Veterans Small Business Week**

Recently National Veterans Small Business Week will be celebrated on November 2-6, 2015. The U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) [empowers veterans](#), active duty service members, Guard and Reserve members and military spouses through entrepreneurial training and education programs, business technical assistance, counseling, special access to capital programs and federal procurement training and access to opportunities.

Join the conversation at [#MyVetBiz](#) to share veteran stories, encourage community members to highlight local veteran-owned businesses in their community, and show gratitude and support to veterans and their families.

### **Veteran's Bootcamp – Still Time to Register**

Please let your area veterans know there is still time to register. The Illinois SBDC at Governor's State University will be hosting their annual Veteran's Entrepreneurial Boot Camp on Thursday, November 12, 2015 from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. The SBDC Veteran's Entrepreneurial Boot Camp is perfect for veterans

and non-veterans who are interested in knowing more about how veterans can take advantage of being a veteran in business, the path to success through the guidance of veteran business owners as well as many other aspects to being a veteran and starting a business.

For more information contact the Illinois SBDC at GSU at 708/534-4929 or register at [www.govst.edu/sbdc-bootcamp](http://www.govst.edu/sbdc-bootcamp). Space is limited so register early. The bootcamp is free to veterans, \$50 for non-veterans.

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and Illinois Department of Commerce Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the Illinois SBDC Network to provide our service delivery partners with current updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. Please send information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to [Tom.Becker@illinois.gov](mailto:Tom.Becker@illinois.gov). Please feel free to forward this update to any other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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